

Sketches of the early history of real estate in St. Paul /

SKETCHES OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF REAL ESTATE IN ST. PAUL.* BY HENRY S. FAIRCHILD.

* Read at the monthly meeting of the Executive Council, May 11, 1903.

St. Paul is located on land on the east side of the Mississippi river, ceded to the United States by the Ojibway Indians on January 29, 1837, and September 9, 1837, and on land west of the river, ceded by the Sioux, July 23 and August 5, 1851.

The first settler was Pierre Parrant, of malodorous fame, who has never been suspected of having posed before an artist as a model for an Adonis. Parrant, having been driven off his first claim, near Fountain cave, close to where the Omaha shops now are, made another claim between Jackson and Minnesota streets, from the river to Twelfth street.

It seemed as though Parrant, who had been a wanderer and an outcast, would permanently occupy this pretty claim overlooking the river; but when Benjamin Gervais offered him the munificent sum of \$10 for it, it was not in human nature to resist, and Parrant sold. So he escaped the curse of becoming a millionaire, and of having a contest over his will; and by this transaction the real estate market was opened in St. Paul.

Closely after Parrant, in 1838 and 1839, came Abraham Perret (Anglicized to Perry), Pierre and Benjamin Gervais, Evans, Hays, Phelan, and Vital Guerin: in 1840, Joseph Rondo, Xavier De Mair, and Father Lucian Galtier, of blessed memory; and, in 1841, Father Ravoux and Pierre Bottineau. Many of these 27 418 became dealers in real estate, and so connected themselves with my theme.

EARLY REAL ESTATE SALES.

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These new settlers were wiser and more sagacious men than Parrant. They foresaw that the time would come, some day, when there would be a church and schoolhouse here, a tavern, and a blacksmith shop, frame instead of log houses, and perhaps,—who knows?—some day a population of several hundred people!

So De Mair, instead of selling his claim out on University avenue, near where the old car barn stood, for a paltry ten dollars, got a horse and wagon for it, and made another claim where Calvary cemetery is, and got for that a pair of horses.

Donald McDonald, who had made a claim where Desnoyer Park is, sold it to Stephen Desnoyer for a barrel of whiskey and two guns; and in 1843 Luther Furnell sold the 160 acres known to you all as the Larpenteur farm,” and later as “Kittsondale,” to Lot Moffet for \$100.

In the same year, 1843, John R. Irvine bought 300 acres, now Rice and Irvine's addition, for \$300,—a property destined in his lifetime to become worth millions of dollars.

The only influence the most of these early squatters ever had on St Paul's destiny was that, being Catholics, they caused a Catholic mission to be established here, which made a nucleus around which others gathered, and which caused our name to be changed from “Pig's Eye” to St. Paul.

But now a more enterprising and intelligent class commences to come in, men who are destined to make their mark in the upbuilding of the city. Henry Jackson and Sergeant Richard W. Mortimer came in 1842; John R. Irvine, James W. Simpson, William Hartshorn, A. L. Larpenteur, Alex. R. McLeod, came in 1843, of whom only Larpenteur still lives. Long may he live!

Louis Robert and Charles Bazille came in 1844; Charles Cavalier and Jesse Pomroy in 1845; William H. Randall, Thomas S. Odell, and David Faribault, in 1846; and Major William H. Forbes, John Banfil, J. W. Bass, Benjamin W. Brunson, Ira B. 419 Brunson, Dr.

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John J. Dewey, and Simeon P. Folsom, in 1847. These men, all well known, who figure largely in the history of St. Paul, became more or less dealers in real estate. Many others came, whom my limited space compels me to omit.

The first deed on record in Ramsey county was from Henry Jackson to William Hartshorn, of date April 23, 1844, conveying for \$1,000¹ one-half "of all the following tract or parcel of land lying and being in the County of St. Croix, Territory of Wisconsin, it being the place where the said Jackson now lives, and lying immediately on the Mississippi river, and known as St. Paul's Landing." This included, certain buildings thereon. It contained three acres.

The city was not platted, so it could not be described by lots and blocks; and the land had not yet been surveyed by the government, so it could not be described as a subdivision of a section, township, and range. Jackson, the grantor, had no title, only a "squatter's claim." But woe to the man who on the frontiers attempts to "jump a claim," or at government sale to bid against the "squatter!"

After thais sale of Jackson to Hartshorn, the real estate market was rather quiet, no further sale being recorded until June 16, 1846, nearly two years later, when Pierre Bottineau sold to Francis Chenevert and David Benoit 100 acres, "bounded as follows: On the east by Kittson, on the north by James R. Clewett, on the west by Hartshorn and Jackson, and on the South by Louis Robert." There was no further description; not even the county or territory was mentioned. The consideration of the deed was \$300, or \$3 per acre. It is now Whitney and Smith's addition, embracing the very heart of the wholesale district, and Seventh and Eighth streets, from Jackson to Broadway. It is worth today at least \$3,000,000; just ten thousand times its cost. And here sits Larpenteur, who has witnessed all these wondrous changes. What an old, old man he must be!

Preceding this on the records is a mortgage to "H. H. Sibley, of Mendota, Clayton county, Iowa territory."

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In several of the deeds made in 1847 and 1848, the properties sold are described as being certain lots in certain blocks "in the City of St. Paul;" and sometimes it is added, "as surveyed and platted by Ira B. Brunson," although no plat of St. 420 Paul was on record, and the only plat of the "City of St. Paul" now of record is one surveyed and platted by Benjamin W. Brunson in 1849.

As a matter of fact, the proprietors of the land (about ninety acres) embraced in the plat of "St. Paul Proper," as we now call it, sent to Prairie du Chien in 1847, for Ira B. Brunson to come up and survey and plat it, which he did; and with that survey the plat on record by Benjamin W. Brunson, in 1849, corresponds as to lots, blocks, etc. As the boys say, they were "too previous" in 1847, no government survey having been made, and they having no title, save a "squatter's claim."

INCREASE IN VALUES.

Let me now recite a few more sales of these early days, that I may refer to them at different periods to show the advances in values.

On September 13, 1847, Alex. R. McLeod sold to William C. Renfro sixty feet on Third street, through to Bench, just east of the Mannheimer block, on the corner of Third and Minnesota streets. The price of the sixty feet was \$200. In 1857 it was worth \$6,000! In 1887 it was worth \$60,000. I put no value for the present time, lest I do an owner injustice. We all know that values on Third street have receded since 1887: and that on Sixth and Robert and other streets they have advanced.

On October 29, 1847, McLeod sold to William Hartshorn lot 1, block 33, on the southwest corner of Third and Minnesota streets, for \$200. Ten years later it was worth twenty-five times its cost, and forty years later two hundred and fifty times its cost.

When smiling at the recollection that the men of those days paid three per cent. per month for money, remember that these advances in values from 1847 to 1857 were at the rate

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of 100, 200, 300, 400, or 500 per cent. per year, or sometimes much more. One would be a stoic, indeed, not to imbibe the spirit of speculation and to borrow, at even the high rate named, with the hope of such profit.

On April 10, 1848, Louis Robert sold to Henry C. Rhodes (note the description) “a tract beginning at the corner of Robert 421 St. 75 feet, and then parallel with 3d street until it strikes the line between lots 9 and 10 on Block No. 26.” This is all the description. It doesn't say in what town or addition, what street corners with Robert, nor which corner, nor in what direction the line ran which was to be parallel with Third street. And this is only a sample of many such deeds.

On May 27, 1847 (recorded in 1848), David Faribault sold to A. L. Larpenteur for \$62.50, “a piece [I quote literally] 22 yards fronting on the back of Jackson's fence, and adjoining La Roche on the north and D. Faribault on the south, running back to the middle of the ravine from Hartshorn's claim, being 22 yards front and 21 yards back, containing one acre more or less.” Although so loose in description, they were very careful to retain all the ancient legal verbiage, and Larpenteur got “all the appurtenances, reversions, remainders, rents, issues, and profits thereof.”

This is the property fronting about 66 feet on Third street, 300 on Jackson, and 63 feet on Fourth street, on part of which the Hale Block is located. Mr. Hale bought it October 21, 1865, for \$30,000, an advance in price of \$29,937.50 in eighteen years,—not counting the value of some old buildings on it, which he afterward removed. In 1887 the same ground without buildings was worth \$100,000. As a matter of fact, Larpenteur sold to Faribault a horse for \$80, and got this property and \$17.50 cash, making the cost of the ground \$62.50. But how old was that horse? What was he worth? It isn't certain that Larpenteur really gave more than \$20 or \$30 for the ground.

In 1848 the market became more active, thirty-five sales having been made.

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On January 21, 1848, McLeod sold to S. J. Findley, of St. Peter's (Mendota), Iowa Territory, the lot where the News office now is, and two lots on Minnesota street, south of the Germania Life Building, for \$50. It was a good place to put \$50, and hold the property.

On April 14, 1848, McLeod sold to Jackson the northeast corner lot of Third and Minnesota streets for \$47.50. It fronted 80 feet on Third and 50 feet on Minnesota. Ten years later it was worth \$5,000 or \$6,000, at the least, or more than one hundred times its cost to Jackson; and in 1887 it was worth \$40,000 to \$50,000. ,

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Here is an example of changes in values. On the 15th of June, 1848, only one year before Governor Ramsey and William P. Murray came here, Louis Robert sold to B. W. Brunson three lots on the northwest corner of Robert and Fifth streets, where the Milwaukee railway ticket office now is, for \$30, or \$10 per lot, worth today \$125,000 to \$150,000, or five thousand times what Brunson paid. Property on Third street was then worth five times as much as on Robert street, but now only one-fifth as much.

You will bear in mind that the land here was surveyed by the government in 1848 (the same year in which these lots were sold), and that it had been bought at \$1.25 per acre; so that six lots (an acre) at \$10 per lot, or \$60 per acre, was a good profit in a few months on the \$1.25 investment.

Here is a land sale with a lesson. October 21, 1848, Richard Freeborn sold to Henry Jackson forty-eight acres, now a part of Stinson, Brown and Ramsey's addition, near the Omaha shops, for \$100, or about two dollars per acre. At a very conservative estimate this land (now city lots) is at present worth \$2,000 per acre, or about one thousand times its cost; yet it has been sold and mortgaged so often that the abstracts often contain over a hundred numbers, and these abstracts, and the attorney's fees for examining titles in case of each sale or mortgage, have cost more than the property is now worth! What an argument for the Torrens system of transfer of real estate!

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November 14, 1848, after the survey, John R. Irvine sold to Henry M. Rice eighty acres just west of St. Peter street, now a part of Rice and Irvine's addition, for \$3 per acre. It was platted the next year, and was sold at the rate of \$300 to \$500 per acre. Both Irvine and Rice lived to see it worth millions of dollars.

December 22, 1848, Louis Robert sold to David Olmsted and H. C. Rhodes 100 by 100 feet on the southeast corner of Fourth and Robert streets for \$200,—or \$100 per lot of 50 by 100 feet. This was 100 per cent at least over the price in the previous year. Without buildings it would now be cheap at \$100,000,—and around me are men who saw it sell for \$200!

January 10, 1849, Louis Robert sold to Stephen Desnoyer lots 6, 7, and 8, block 25, St. Paul Proper, for \$100. These lots are now covered by the ten-story Germania Life Building.

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Here is a land sale worth noting. On January 8, 1849, James McBoal sold to John R. Irvine the undivided third of the northeast quarter of section 1, township 28, range 23, for \$500. This is about \$10 per acre. It is now a part of Dayton and Irvine's addition, embracing the very heart of the best part of our residence district, and one single front foot of it on Summit avenue has sold for \$500,—just what Irvine paid for a third of the whole tract.

I want now to call your attention to a few sales in 1850, '51, and '52, to show advances in value, and how these advances accord with increase in population.

October 9, 1850, Louis Robert sold to Charles Cavalier the west half of lot 13, block 25, of the "City of St. Paul," for \$350 (at the rate of \$700 per lot). It had been sold in 1848 for \$50, so that the advance was 1,300 per cent, in two years.

April 19, 1851, Vital Guerin sold to William G. Le Duc, whom I see present here tonight, lot 1, block 34, of the City of St. Paul, fronting on Third, Wabasha, and Bench streets, now

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covered by the Ingersoll Block, for \$900. This was a good advance on \$50, the price at which it sold two years before. Still it was an excellent purchase, as Le Duc sold it in three or four years for \$7,500.

No government surveys of lands in Ramsey county had been made prior to 1848, and all previous sales of lands or lots were simply of "squatter's claims." The situation was becoming awkward.

FIRST LEGAL TITLES IN ST. PAUL PROPER.

The government having made surveys in 1848, those having "claims" in the ninety acres covered by the unrecorded plat of the "City of St. Paul," made by Ira B. Brunson in 1847, appointed H. H. Sibley, A. L. Larpenteur, and Louis Robert, as commissioners to bid off the land at the first government land sale in what is now Minnesota, made August 14, 1848, at St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin. H. H. Sibley, for the commissioners, surrounded by twenty or thirty lusty fellows with bludgeons, as warning to all that it would be dangerous for any one to bid against him, bought what is now "St. Paul Proper," as we call it, for the minimum government price of 424 \$1.25 per acre; and he, with the other commissioners. Larpenteur and Robert, made the apportionment in lots and blocks to the "claimants," according to their respective interests.

Though the climate here is regarded as very healthy, as certified by Dr. Ohage, and attested by the tables of mortality, it was, in pioneer days, found to be insalubrious by those who at land sales bid against the "squatters."

And now we find in the office of the register of deeds for Ramsey county, as the first entry on the records of town plats, that the City of St. Paul, in the County of St. Croix, State of Wisconsin, was platted February 28, 1849, by Louis Robert, Henry Jackson, Charles Cavalier, Henry H. Sibley, Vital Guerin, J. W. Bass, August L. Larpenteur. William Henry Forbes, J. W. Simpson, A. C. Rhodes, L. H. La Roche, and John B. Coty.

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In the copy of the plat, the heading is "City of St. Paul, the Capital of Minnesota;" but that was not the name, and St. Paul was not the capital of Minnesota, and was not then in Minnesota, but in Wisconsin, as Minnesota did not then exist. In the original plat is this indorsement:

Office of the Register of Deeds for Ramsey County, Minnesota.—ss.

I hereby certify that the within map of St. Paul was filed in this office for record (in accordance with an act of the legislature of the State of Minnesota, approved Feb. 14, 1866) on the 17th day of March, A. D. 1866, at 3 o'clock p. m., and was duly recorded in Book G of Town Plats, page 13.

Jacob Mainzer , Register of Deeds.

To this act of the legislature I will refer later in this paper. There is also an indorsement on the plat:

This is the original plat of Lower St. Paul, Minn. Territory.

August, 1849. C. K. Smith , Secretary of the Territory.

This certificate was worthless and misleading, in that it did not give the true name of the plat. I have gone into detail as to this plat, because it was of "St. Paul Proper," as we now call it, the first plat in the city, now the heart of the business district.

Neither the acknowledgement of the plat by the proprietors, nor the certificate of the surveyor, mentions the county or territory, the section, township, or range, in which the city is located. And this is true of Whitney and Smith's, Rice and Irvine's, 425 Leech's, Bazille and Guerin's, Hoyt's, Paterson's, Joel Whitney's, and Willes' additions; and in several instances the proprietors do not even sign the plats, and so do not dedicate the streets,

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alleys, and parks. Yet for years the attorneys examined and passed and purchasers took titles in them.

Of course, we understand that the sale of a lot according to a plat by the proprietor is a recognition of the plat; and that the law presumes a dedication for public use of all streets, alleys, parks, etc., marked on the plat; also that, in the language of the law, “id certum est quod certum reddi potest,”—“that is certain which can be made certain.” So if you can definitely and positively locate a point on the plat, and have directions and distances given, you can ascertain the boundaries of the plat and locate and define the lots; but most of us can have enough lawsuits without buying them.

So after the lapse of sixteen or seventeen years the legislature passed the curative act referred to, on the 11th of February, 1866, which reads as follows:

Chapter 90, Special Laws of 1866.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota :

Section 1. The plat now in the register's office of the county of Ramsey, headed “City of St. Paul,” and upon which is written, “This is the original plat of lower Saint Paul. Minnesota Territory, Aug., 1849. C. K. Smith, Secretary of Territory,” together with the certificate of acknowledgement thereto annexed, purporting to be signed by “David Lambert” and “Benj. W. Brunson,” justices of the peace, and by H. Jackson and others, is hereby directed to be filed by the register of said county in his office, and, when so filed, is to be a public record, and the said register is also directed to record said plat and certificate, and such record is to have the same effect as other public records, and certified copies thereof shall be admissible in evidence in all courts of this State, as well as said original plat and the record thereof.

Sec. 2. All plats on file in said register's office, purporting to dedicate lands to public use for streets, highways or other public purposes, shall be admissible in evidence without

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further proof, and shall be *prima facie* evidence of such dedication, and no action shall be entertained to question such purported dedication, unless commenced within two years after the passage of this act; *Provided*, That this act shall not apply to any actions now pending against said city.

And thus, after seventeen years, this bungling work in platting was remedied by legislative enactment.

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It is very interesting to note that here, on the very borders of civilization, is a little group of men platting lands for a city (which lands were but yesterday surveyed and entered, and the day before belonged to the Indians) on a scale that argued a most remarkable sagacity; and that three of this little group should become governors of the future state (Sibley, Ramsey, and Marshall); that another of them should afterward represent us in Congress (Edmund Rice); that two of them should become United States senators (Ramsey and H. M. Rice); one of them a member of the president's cabinet and another the U. S. commissioner of agriculture (Ramsey and Le Duc); and yet another, then recording these deeds, a United States senator (M. S. Wilkinson).

We are now entering upon an eventful year, 1849, when wide areas are platted as St. Paul, and its various additions; and the people are full of expectance. Goodhue in the Minnesota Pioneer, just established, is urging the immediate construction of a railroad from St. Louis via St. Paul, to the Red river, and another from the Gulf of Mexico via St. Paul to Hudson bay.

In most curious juxtaposition with this article, is another editorial felicitating the 800 citizens of St. Paul on the fact that a pump has now been put in a well in the lower town, so that our citizens hereafter will not be dependent upon river water. As their little "shoe-box postoffice" is to our present magnificent postoffice, so is this pump to our present magnificent water system.

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On October 25, 1849, H. M. Rice sold to Lyman Dayton a one-third interest in the northeast quarter of section 1, township 28, range 23, now Dayton and Irvine's addition, for \$4,000. Rice bought it one year before for \$500, so that he made 700 per cent profit; and yet what a splendid purchase for Dayton! A single front foot of Summit avenue, south of Selby, part of this land, is now worth, as stated before, nearly as much as Rice paid for the whole tract.

Mr. Rice's name suggests a little story told me by Mr. William H. Tinker, a worthy old settler, to whom I am indebted for an excellent letter on early days. Rice was a man of generous nature, and, pleased with the services rendered by his 427 attorney, W. D. Phillips, made him a present of a valuable lot. When Phillips rendered his account at the end of the year, Rice was surprised to find Phillips had charged him \$5 for drawing the deed to the identical lot he had given him.

May 12, 1849, Vital Guerin sold to Frederick Ely, lot 12, block 23, of St. Paul proper, for \$150. This is on Third street, between Wabasha and Cedar streets. You will remember that one year previous lots there were selling at \$10 to \$50,—a good advance.

In June, 1849, Rice was selling lots in Rice and Irvine's addition, just platted, at \$75 to \$125 per lot, which is at the rate of \$300 to \$500 per acre, for what cost him the previous year \$3 per acre! In fact, he sold a lot to Charles F. Rittenhouse in August, 1849, for \$350, which a year before had cost him \$3 per acre, or 75 cents per lot. That is 466 times its cost!

I am putting exclamation points at the ends of these sentences, but how can I help it? Every statement of real estate history from 1849 to 1857 deserves an exclamation point. Much of the property sold in 1849 paid a profit of 100 per cent per month over prices in 1848.

THE GRAND OLD PIONEERS.

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Time and again I have been struck with the fact that a large per cent of our pioneers, the men who figured in our history from 1849 to 1853, were men of markedly superior abilities. Let me relieve you for a minute from a recital of sales by enumerating some of them, and then tell me, if you can, where else you ever saw as large a percentage of a population equal to them.

Listen to this list: Alexander Ramsey, H. M. Rice, Edmund Rice, H. H. Sibley, Rev. E. D. Neill, Judge R. R. Nelson, George L. Becker, D. A. Robertson, Earle S. Goodrich, James M. Goodhue, Major William H. Forbes, Judge Moses Sherburne, John W. North, Judge David Cooper, Gen. Isaac Van Etten, David Olmsted, Gen. William G. Le Duc, William Hollinshead, Michael E. Ames, John B. Brisbin, W. S. Combs, George W. Armstrong, Judge D. A. J. Baker, Charles H. Oakes, Charles W. W. Borup, N. P. Langford, Major Nathaniel McLean, Horrace R. Bigelow, Capt. Edwin Bell, A. L. Larpenteur, John P. 428 Owens, Capt. Russell Blakeley, William L. Ames, H. F. Masterson, Col. John Farrington, Gov. William R. Marshall, Robert A. Smith, Capt. Peter Berkey, J. C. Burbank, Dr. David Day, B. W. Brunson, David Lambert, William H. Randall, Joseph R. Brown, Nathan Myrick, Judge Lafayette Emmett, Lyman Dayton, Judge A. G. Chatfield, Judge William H. Welsh, S. P. Folsom, William P. Murray, Morton S. Wilkinson, Col. John S. Prince, Judge Charles E. Flandrau, Dr. Thomas Foster, Pennock Pusey, Joseph A. Wheelock, and Willis A. Gorman.

We have noted the platting of the city of St. Paul, February 28, 1849. Now followed several additions, in quick succession,

Whitney and Smith's addition was by Cornelius S. Whitney and Robert Smith, of Illinois, July 24, 1849, and the same was platted February 11, 1852, by Bushrod W. Lott, Joel E. Whitney, John F. Butterworth, Daniel A. J. Baker, Charles T. Whitney, and Martha, his wife, and Eliza L. Whitney.

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Rice and Irvine's addition was by Henry M. Rice and John R. Irvine, July 2, 1849. They reserved all water rights.

Leech's addition was by Samuel Leech, August 23, 1849.

Bazille and Guerin's addition was by Charles Bazille and Vital Guerin, November 4, 1850. This was the only addition platted in 1850.

They had platted quickly nearly all this basin from Goodrich street in the West Seventh street district clear down to Dayton's bluff, and then seemed to stop, to hesitate, to reflect. Who should occupy this vast territory already platted? The situation was not inviting—most of it was boggy. The climate was severe. There was no way to come here except by boats, and this for only half the year.

“What do we know,” I imagine I hear them saying, “of the extent of the tributary country, of its productive capacity, or what it will produce? How do we know but that, remote as we are, the Indians may rise and massacre our people? Are we not the victims of self-deception? Have we not suffered our fancies to make fools of us?”

They had dreamed they were platting what would be a great metropolitan city, that all their thousands and thousands of lots would be needed for habitations and for the multifarious kinds of 429 business, the sales of which would greatly enrich them. Now their confidence and their courage wavered, and their bright hopes began to die out, and they suspected they had committed an act of stupendous folly.

A VISION OF THE FUTURE.

While they were thus counselling together as to the future, I imagine I see the Genius of Geography, in vast and misty form, appearing before them, and, with uplifted finger, saying, “Hesitate not! Men, for want of comprehension of the force of geographic facts, often build cities which flourish for a time and then decay. But there are points on all

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continents where cities are sure to rise and flourish and grow with the centuries. Of these St. Paul is one. Hesitate not! Lay here deep and broad the foundations of a city which is destined to be one of the foremost on the continent.

“The wonderful Mississippi valley, a vast region, equaled nowhere in the world in extent and productiveness, lying in a zone that produces an infinite variety of grains, fruits, vegetables, cotton and sugar cane, stretches between the Eastern and Western mountain ranges, from the Lakes to the Gulf. Through this matchless, imperial garden of the world, flows the kingly Mississippi, with its princely tributaries. Here, at the head of navigation of this great arterial river, lay you the foundations of your city. Some day its channels shall be narrowed and deepened, and it shall bear on its bosom a vast commerce.

“Build in the midst of this beautiful scenery, where lakes and rivers and waterfalls begem the landscape! Build in this healthy climate, where the tonic atmosphere inspires to great enterprises and heroic achievements. And plan all things broadly! For I see clearly a city which in the future shall far surpass your largest conceptions.

“I see great railways from every direction gathering here, pouring wealth into your lap. I see science transforming all your water powers into electric energy to transport people and freight, to drive all machinery, and to illuminate your buildings and streets. I see factories springing up that will darken your heavens in the day and illuminate the night. I see a commerce developing, so vast, so far-reaching, and yet expanding, as to awaken fear and jealousy in the ancient marts of trade on the Atlantic.

“I see this valley resounding with traffic, and the heights that environ you crowned with beautiful homes, palatial residences, and majestic public edifices that equal those of cities on which the moss of centuries rests. Fear not! You have planned not broadly enough.

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"I see all this territory between where we stand and the Falls of St. Anthony dotted with literary, theological, and agricultural colleges, and covered with an intelligent, cultured, and moral population.

"I would not tax your faith too much, but I look upon the boundless region to the west which I have made irrevocably and forever tributary to you, and see its future population and production; and I predict that within your borders more than a million people shall dwell ere the first half of the twentieth century shall have passed.

"I see in the near future two heroic figures arise whose genius for affairs shall unlock for them the treasures of the world, to enable them to build a network of railroads over the western part of the continent. Each has the hundred eyes of Argus, and the hundred arms of Briareus. They see the golden grain waving on the great, broad, boundless, billowy plains to your west, and out go their iron arms to gather it all up and lay it in your lap.

"They glance at Montana, to be, and with their hundred wizard eyes, they see the buried treasures of silver and gold in her mountains and the multiplied thousands of sheep and cattle grazing on her plains; and with their iron arms, these, too, are brought in to enrich you.

"Nature has reared in vain the mighty ranges of mountains to protect against their rapacity the Pacific coast. Villard and Hill will burst through the Rocky mountains, spy out the salmon fisheries, the vast Red Tree forests, and all the wealth of fields and streams and forests and mines on that seemingly secure coast; and out will again go their hundred arms to bring all in to you, to still further enrich you.

"Hill, with insatiable ambition, looks out over the western 431 waters, and sees Australia, Ceylon, China and Japan, and India, with their hundreds of millions of inhabitants, whose rich commerce has made possible all the great cities on the Mediterranean coasts in ancient and modern times, and he builds great ships, such as never before vexed the

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bosom of the mild Pacific, to go and gather up this rich trade of the opulent Orient and lay it as a crowning gift in the lap of St. Paul, that this city may fulfil its destiny, and be the great interior city of the continent.

“Once again I charge you, lay deep and broad the foundations, for your children's children shall see here a city whose population, beauty, wealth, commerce, manufactures, schools and colleges, and noble charities, shall surpass your most sanguine expectations.”

THE PLATTING OF ADDITIONS.

And then these pioneers, the Rices, Robert, Irvine, Dayton, Guerin, Bazille, Marshall, Whitney, Tinker, Hoyt, Winslow, Ramsey, Kittson, Brunson, and all, with renewed courage, sent out their surveyors to plat yet wider areas for the great city they had heard so confidently predicted.

So in 1851 there were platted, successively, Hoyt's addition, by B. F. Hoyt, January 9; Vanderburg's addition to Hoyt's addition, April 7; Irvine's enlargement of Rice and Irvine's addition, July 19; Paterson's addition, by Rev. A. B. Paterson, August 3; Willes' addition, by Charles L. Willes, September 12; Joel Whitney's addition, by Joel Whitney and D. A. J. Baker, September 29; and Winslow's addition, by James M. Winslow, October 20. In all seven additions were made in 1851, as against one in 1850.

With unabated courage they proceeded to plat in 1852 as follows: Kittson's addition, by C. W. W. Borup, May 1; Brunson's addition, by B. W. Brunson, July 13; Bass' addition, by J. W. Bass, September 23; Hoyt's Outlots, by B. F. Hoyt, October 20; and Robert and Randall's addition, by John Randall and Louis Robert, December 7. Thus five, additions were made in 1852.

In 1853 the number of additions platted was six; in 1854, eleven; in 1855, six; in 1856, twenty-nine; and in 1857, twenty-five. 432 Stop and think of it! It is enough to take one's breath, their pace was so rapid! Fifty-four additions platted in two years!.

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The Genius of Geography had strongly impressed them! And they were in the main right. The great city was to be; but the potency of time was necessary to the realization of their gorgeous dreams. They had not considered that periods of depression and stagnation, even retrogression, would take place and so postpone the accomplishment of their schemes.

We have seen the increased activity in platting. Now let us see how the number of sales in this same series of years compares with it.

The records of Ramsey county show one sale of real estate in 1844; none in 1845; one in 1846; eleven in 1847, when only 50 people were here; 35 in 1848; 175 in 1849, with 940 people here; 196 in 1850, with a population of 1,294 by the census; 786 in 1851; 939 in 1852; 1,165 in 1853; 1,872 in 1854; 2,560 in 1855, with a population of 4,716, there being thus more than half as many sales as there were people; 2,798 sales in 1856, with 6,000 people; and 790 sales in 1857, the population then being 9,937. With what leaps and bounds they advanced!

In 1849 "The City of St. Paul" and several large additions were platted, and the sales were 175. In 1856, seven years later, the number of sales was 2,798. What days these were for surveyors and real estate agents, over eight sales per day the year's average, being more than now, when we have thirty times the population!

Some of these additions are the farthest outlying plats we have today (Except the Midway plats), viz., "Washington Heights," in Dakota county; "Glen Toro," near lake Thoreau, or Sunfish lake, five miles south of us; "Iglehart, Hall and Mackubin's addition," near lake Phalen (now "Eastville Heights" and "Oakville Park"); and "St. Paul Park," on lake Josephine. Evidently they thought that the predicted million inhabitants would be here before the twentieth century commenced.

Besides all this, they platted the town of "De Soto," half-way between St. Paul and Stillwater; "Glencarrie," and other towns, in which never has a house been built, and which long ago were vacated and turned again into farms.

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REAL ESTATE AGENTS.

It goes without saying that, with only thirteen sales up to 1848, and thirty-five in 1848, there were no real estate agents before 1849. Then they began to make their appearance, but were mostly lawyers, taking real estate agency as a side issue. It has generally been understood, and I believe it is so stated in some of the histories of the city, that Charles R. Conway was the first to hang out his shingle as a real estate agent in 1849, but I am inclined to think that David Lambert was the first.

I find in Volume 1, No. 1, of the Minnesota Pioneer, the first issue of the first paper published in St. Paul, Lambert's card in French, as "Avocat en droit, et Agent des terres" (Lawyer and Land Agent).

A little later, June 14, 1849, Bushrod W. Lott's card appeared in the same paper as Lawyer and Land Agent, and he acted as agent of Whitney and Smith for sale of lots in their addition. In the next month, July, B. F. Irvine advertised lots in Rice and Irvine's addition; and in the next month. August. W. D. Phillips' card appeared, as Lawyer and Land Agent.

Soon afterward William P. Murray advertised as agent for the sale of Louis Robert's realty, and so he is entitled to the high honor of having once been a real estate agent. As he was here practicing law at that early day, it is probable that in the "Great Day of Reckoning" he will be held accountable for having examined and passed some of the defective titles heretofore referred to.

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November 14, 1850, Judge R. R. Nelson's card appeared as lawyer and land agent, and as having for sale lots in Leech's addition.

From all this list of real estate agents it is obvious that a market had opened in 1849 and 1850; but much of it must have been in lands in adjacent counties.

Returning to the not very important but much discussed question as to who was the first agent, I will say that if any one can claim priority in that line over Lambert, it would be B. F. Hoyt, or "Father Hoyt," as we all called him. Mr. Hoyt came here in 1848, and was soon actively engaged as a speculator 28 434 and land and loan agent. He platted "Suburban Hills," "Hoyt's Addition," and "Hoyt's Outlots," bought and sold thousands of acres near the city, and narrowly escaped becoming a millionaire. He once told me that he "had three times been saved from being a millionaire by the grace of God." He may have felt "really and truly" grateful for "this great salvation," but we are sometimes unconsciously self-deceived. If Father Hoyt had become a millionaire, doubtless he would have thanked God for the millions and used them as generously as he always did that which he had.

RIVALRY BETWEEN THE UPPER AND THE LOWER TOWN.

As soon as our pioneers had platted their respective additions, a warfare broke out between the upper and the lower town, as bitter as ever was waged between St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The first struggle was over the capitol site, Henry M. Rice and quite an array of strong men seeking to have it located somewhere near the "Seven Corners." Robert, Randall, Bazille, and others, sought to locate it in the lower town. They tried to persuade Charles Bazille to donate to the state the block on which the old capitol now stands; but he thought it hardly fair that he should bear the whole burden, even though it did, as they said, enhance the value of his other property. So Vital Guerin, Major William H. Forbes, Louis Robert, and John Randall, all of whom had large interests to be affected, agreed, in consideration of

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his deeding said block to the state, that they would each deed to him certain lots, which was done. Bazille deeded the block to the State, not specifying that it was for a capitol, or any special purpose, or on any condition, but by a straight, clean, unconditional deed.

This struggle was hardly over before another arose over the steamboat landing. Originally it was at the lower landing, but J. C. Burbank built a good covered dock at the upper levee, and John R. Irvine built a large warehouse there. The Minnesota river boats, of which several for a number of years were regularly run by Capt. Edwin Bell, Louis Robert, and others, made their landings at the upper levee; and for some time it looked as though the upper levee was to be the principal steamboat landing. But after a while J. C. Burbank removed his dock to the lower levee, railroads were built through the Minnesota river valley, taking the trade from the river, which later ceased to be navigable, and the lower levee became the steamboat landing of St. Paul. From all I can learn from the old settlers, it was always the principal landing.

It will interest the old settlers and pioneers, at least, to recall the leaders in the contests alluded to. The major general of the upper town forces was Henry M. Rice, and by his side stood John R. Irvine, C. L. Emerson, John Farrington, George Culver, H. F. Masterson, William Hollinshead, George L. Becker, Levi Sloan, the Fuller brothers, and the Elfelt brothers. The down town leaders were William H. Randall, C. W. W. Borup, C. H. Oakes, N. W. Kittson, William H. Forbes, A. L. Larpenteur, W. P. Murray, Louis Robert, Aaron Goodrich, Lot Moffet, W. C. Morrison, B. F. Hoyt, Lyman Dayton, J. W. Bass, and Charles Cave. There was thus an array of strong, active men on each side. Some of these were not here in time to take part in the first contests.

Of the additions platted in the years 1849 to 1852, eleven were in the lower town and four in the upper town. I find, too, that the early sales were largely in the lower town. As the lower town had this start, and as presumably they would plat most where demand for lots was most expected, I take it that the lower town had the larger population, and the most business during all those early years.

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I am confirmed in this opinion by an inspection of the Annals of the Historical Society for 1851, in the back part of which is a business directory, which clearly shows that the major part of the city's business was below Wabasha street. The city directory for 1856 shows the same, and it is a safe statement and prediction that below Wabasha street has always been, and always will be, the business district of St. Paul, and that the principal residence district will always be in the west end.

All this, and the changes of business from Third street to Sixth, Seventh, and other streets, and the change of residence centers from Eighth street between Jackson and Sibley, from, the 436 corner of Sixth and Broadway, from lower Eighth and Ninth streets; from Woodward avenue and vicinity, and from Dayton's bluff, to a final resting place, St. Anthony hill, are legitimate and easily deducible results of the topography of the city. The firm man to foresee these changes and predict them was A. Vance Brown, whose warning to Horace Thompson not to build on Woodward avenue many of you will remember.

At the Seven Corners, in 1857, when I first came here, stood the Winslow House, and near the corner of Third and Exchange streets, the American, both well patronized. There was a certain tone of respectability and an intellectual atmosphere about these hotels that impressed one favorably: and in that district were a number of banks, the theater, and quite a number of stores. At a casual glance, one was likely to think that that was the center of business in the city; and so for a time I thought, but a scrutiny of the facts showed that judgment to be wrong.

More and more business has moved down town, and more and more population has moved up town. Much property within a few blocks of Seven Corners will not sell for as much as it would forty-five years ago; while property on Robert, Wabasha, Sixth, and Seventh streets, will sell for two hundred times as much as then. It will amuse you to know that the first dry goods store in St. Paul was on Eagle street, near the river!

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As to residence property in the two districts (the upper and the lower town), the foregoing statement could be nearly reversed. As certainly as the lower town will always be the principal business district, so certain is it that the upper town will always be the main residence district, owing to its topography, to the broad liberal spirit and taste of those who platted the principal additions, to its situation between the two cities, and to the centralization of educational institutions in the Midway district.

LAND DISPUTES SETTLED BY UNIQUE METHODS.

The disputes with regard to titles and boundary lines in those pioneer days were quickly settled. A case in point was a dispute as to a boundary between William L. Ames, Sr., and 437 Lyman Dayton. They were engaged in a heated controversy at the foot of Dayton's bluff, where are now, and were then, large springs, and a long, deep watering trough. Dayton grew hot in the dispute, and Ames, feeling that the matter should be coolly dicussed, picked Dayton up and laid him in the trough of cold spring water, after which the matter was easily adjusted.

A dispute as to who first made his claim and erected his shanty on a tract down by "Pig's Eye lake" arose between Michael Le Claire, of Mendota and Pierre Parrant. To settle it they went before H. H. Sibley, justice of the peace at Mendota, but he told them his jurisdiction only extended from the west side of the Mississippi to the Rocky mountains, and that Joe Brown was justice of the peace from Point Prescott to lake Superior, and that, as the land in question was east of the river, they must go to him. They did so. Brown heard the evidence, each swearing that he had made his claim first, as they may have honestly thought. Our modern Solomon, unable to decide from the evenly balanced testimony, went out, made a stake, which with an ax he laid at one corner of the claim, took Le Claire and Parrant in his wagon, drove away about twelve miles, and then told them to strip off their coats and race for the stake. The one who reached it first, and with

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the ax drove down the stake, should have the land. They did so, and Le Claire beat. Parrant accepted the decision and moved off.

Only recently the assignees of the heirs of Parrant related the case to an attorney, who told them no such method of adjudicating a land title was known to our laws, and that he could set it aside. Suit was brought in the district court, which upheld Brown's decision, holding that their assent to the amicable method of settlement was evidenced by their making the race, and by Parrant having voluntarily abandoned the claim. But Parrant's attorney, not satisfied with this, carried the case to the supreme court, which sustained the lower court, and the wisdom of Solomon No. 2 was vindicated.

Here is an extract from a letter of date July, 1850, written by William G. Le Duc to his wife. He was evidently thinking of moving to St. Paul, and had been "house hunting." He wrote: "Rent for a little shanty, one-story, two rooms, N. E. corner 438 Robert and Third, is \$9.00 per month. Town lots selling for \$200 and \$300. Money commands 4 and 5 per cent per month. There are only about 1,000 permanent settlers now, but the population increases rapidly and it is destined to become a great city. The other day at Mendota I heard a party of Sioux Indians, who in full dress toggery were sitting on the bank as our steamer approached, chant a song of welcome to us."

SOME OF ST. PAUL'S LOYAL EULOGISTS.

Among the multitudinous real estate agents, there are a few whose memories will be long cherished, and who are thoroughly identified with our city's history. Such was the ardent, irascible, erratic, broad-guaged, generous-hearted Henry McKenty.

Another was Col. Girard Hewitt, a tall, handsome, senatorial-looking gentleman, an inimitable story-teller, the discoverer of the "Midway District." That is, he was more sagacious than the rest of us, first saw and industriously proclaimed its great future, and made large and profitable investments there. He persistently and ably wrote up the city

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and state, and did much in this way, and as state immigration commissioner, to attract capital and population to Minnesota and St. Paul.

In ante-railroad days he and I wrote up, in home and eastern papers, this state and the Dakotas, their soil, climate, scenery, etc., knowing that the sure basis of the city's growth was the settlement of the tributary country. When the railroads came in and got their land grants, they advertised these states in order to sell their lands, and we gave our attention wholly to the city's interests.

At one time a number of old settlers died in quick succession. Col. Hewitt came into my office soon afterward, looking very solemn, and asked if he could see me privately. I went aside with him, and with grave aspect and deep voice he said. "Mr. Fairchild, have you noticed how many old settlers have dropped out recently?" I said I had, very many of them. "Do you ever stop to think that in the course of events you and I must go soon?" I said that before many years we would all be gone. 439 Then, straightening himself up to his full six feet, with measured, deep, solemn voice, he said: "Mr. Fairchild, do you ever reflect that when you and I go up before the great white throne, to answer for all the deeds done in the body, we have an awful account to render for all the lies we have written about the climate of Minnesota?" And then, with a "Good day, sir," he strode out.

One day I introduced him to a gentleman from the East on his first visit here. Hewitt greeted him with his accustomed cordial, yet dignified manner, and asked him how he liked our young city and state. He replied, "Very well indeed, so far as I have seen, but I suppose it is very cold in winter here?" Hewitt, with an air of great dignity, said: "Cold! It is true, it is sometimes somewhat cool in winter, yet we have the best climate in the world, sir. Spring comes with a freshness of verdure and purity of atmosphere that make existence a delight. Our summers are glorious. Our autumns, with their soft, hazy, langorous atmosphere, and with all the scenery glorified by the gold and crimson glow of the trees and shrubbery, are beyond expression beautiful. But our winters, sir, are the crowning glory of the year, sometimes somewhat cool, it's true, but never any wind,—

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occasionally a gentle perturbation of the atmosphere!" Then our laugh came in, and Hewitt and the stranger were at once on a good footing.

Col. J. W. McClung, a chevalier-looking gentleman, a son of Judge McClung, of Kentucky, closely related to Chief Justice Marshall, a nephew of the gallant Col. Alex. McClung, of Mississippi, who was a distinguished soldier and orator and famous duelist, was another devoted and thoroughly loyal friend of St. Paul and Minnesota, and freely used a graceful and forceful pen in championing their interests. McClung held and honorably filled many city and county offices, and was the author of a book on "Minnesota," which was a good immigration document.

Col. J. H. Davidson wielded a good, strong pen, and was largely instrumental, as editor and real estate agent, in attracting population and capital to St. Paul, and for many years held one of the leading places in the real estate ranks. He 440 was really a brilliant orator, not fully appreciated when here, but has since achieved a national reputation.

Tracy M. Metcalf wrote well in our behalf, but used his pen too sparingly.

There is one other I must not omit to mention, for he deserves well of St. Paul. I will have to impose a restraint on myself when speaking of Thomas Cochran, for my admiration of his abilities and appreciation of his services to St. Paul are such that it will be hard to refrain from using superlatives. So I will only say that, among all the real estate agents of St. Paul from 1849 to the present time, no other one has by public speech at home and throughout the East, by articles in our local papers and in many of the eastern states, by his championship of our interests in the Chamber of Commerce and in other public assemblies, deserved so large a measure of St. Paul's gratitude.

Our city is greatly indebted to the brilliant galaxy of editors who have made it famous for its journalism. Some of these never became specially interested in the city's growth and

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so are not mentioned here, but were strong, vigorous, graceful writers and made good newspapers. No doubt I omit some who are entitled to grateful mention.

James M. Goodhue, the first editor of the first paper published here, the Minnesota Pioneer, was a brilliant writer, and never ceased for a day to write in favor of St. Paul and Minnesota, to zealously advocate all measures in their interest, to herald what they had done, and predict the brilliant future he foresaw for them. He instilled his courage, confidence, and enthusiasm into all who read the Pioneer; and no doubt every issue was instrumental in adding to our population.

H. P. Hall, in his Dispatch and in his Globe (he started both), ably and industriously championed our interests, constantly paraded the great things St. Paul had accomplished, and predicted her great future. He was always ready to contribute his full share of labor or money to make the prediction good.

T. M. Newson, Louis Fisher, S. B. Woolworth, Ed. Johnson, E. B. Northrup, J. Fletcher Williams, and J. H. Davidson, all with steadfast loyalty to and real love for the city of their choice, constantly proclaimed her commercial advantages and her 441 growth; and zealously set forth the healthfulness of our climate, the beauty of our scenery, the vastness and productivity of our tributary country. This was done mostly in the local columns.

It is no disparagement to others to say, however, that no man ever wrote in St. Paul's behalf so ably, so brilliantly, so continuously, and so voluminously, as Joseph A. Wheelock. His characteristically able and brilliant articles written in promotion of St. Paul's interests would alone make a huge volume. Add to this his zealous advocacy of all measures or enterprises beneficial to the city, and his unflinching opposition to all mistaken or corrupt schemes prejudicial to the city; consider also our peerless park system, which is and is to be ours mainly through his instrumentality; and you will agree with me, that to no man is St. Paul a larger debtor.

THE PRESENT AND PAST BUILDERS OF THE CITY.

There are two real estate firms (one of them now more interested in the construction and operation of railroads than in real estate) which have largely contributed to the growth and prosperity of the city in another direction.

Oppenheim & Kahlman have done more than any other individual or firm to induce large investments of eastern capital, and thereby to secure the building of many large, splendid business blocks, which today give character to the city.

The other firm mentioned are Smith & Taylor, who have for several years built great numbers of comfortable, tasteful dwellings. They are still astonishing all who go out on the Selby cars with the scores of new houses in course of construction. I hope they will continue the good work, and that many will follow their example.

It would be interesting, if I had time, to go more fully into the changes of business and residence centers, and to philosophize upon their causes, for such changes do not accidentally occur; to note the early development of Dayton's Bluff, and its abated growth; the sudden upbuilding of the "Merriam Hill district," and causes of its arrested growth; the development and constantly accelerated growth of the "St. Anthony Hill district," 442 and its causes; the development of the "Midway district," with its beautiful homes, its handsome boulevards, its numerous educational institutions, and its rapidly increasing industries around "the Transfer;" the sudden transformation of "West St. Paul" (now the Sixth ward) from a village of a few hundred inhabitants to a populous district of 15,000 to 20,000, with many beautiful homes and a large and rapidly increasing business.

I have been able only to glance at the marvelous growth of the city. From 1847 to 1857 there was an average growth of more than 200 per cent, per year. From 1860 onward we boast of an increase of 100 per cent. in ten years, and were crazed by an increase of 200 per cent. from 1880 to 1890.

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An interesting story of the wild speculations of those early days could be told, a story of fabulous profits in a few months, millions made and millions lost in a few years. For it will not do to say it was not profit, that it was all fictitious value. When population mounts from less than two to 10,000 in eight years, with all the resulting improvements, there must be enormous increase of values. And so there was, but men were made delirious; they failed to see the limitations necessarily attached to such conditions; they bought and built, and made notes and mortgages, as if this rapid growth and advance in values would continue indefinitely.

They waked from their dream in 1857, and a sad, sad story is that of the next few years. We reached in that panic year the mouth of the cave of gloom and despair; let us not enter it, as we would not have time to go through the dark years and come out into the sunlight of more prosperous years.

'T is a world of pity that nearly every one of those bold, adventurous pioneers, who laid the foundation of our city so well, and who had millions in their easy grasp, died poor. We who knew them may stop and sigh our regrets at their misfortunes, and drop a tear to their memories; but the world moves on with constantly accelerating speed.

The yesterdays are far back of the todays, and the todays are doubtless but a faint prophecy of the tomorrows. The sciences of the few have become the common knowledge of the many. The secrets of the laboratories as to the forces of nature are now the applied agencies of transportation and commerce and manufactures, and are made the common conveniences of the household and of the business world.

Irrigation and the application of chemistry and electricity to agriculture shall increase many fold the food products of the country, enabling it to support a far larger population than now. One-third of that population, according to the indications of the census reports, will dwell in cities, enlarging them, to proportions not yet dreamed of; and the young

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men listening to me tonight will live to see the Twin Cities closely grown together, with a population larger than the most hopeful have yet thought it prudent to predict.

The growth in population, commerce, and wealth, will surely come. Let it be your duty and your pride to make our city beautiful, worthy of the noble setting which nature has given it.